



IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claims 15, 19, 25, 26, 28-30 and cancel claims 14, 23, 24 and 27 without prejudice or admission as shown in the following listing of claims, which replaces all previous versions and listings of claims.

1. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;

a transfer chamber connected to the process chamber via a gate valve;

a transfer apparatus disposed in the transfer chamber, the transfer apparatus having a pair of generally parallel and spaced-apart tapes each having a tip end portion and at least one workpiece holder connected to the tip end portion of each of the tapes for supporting the workpiece, the tapes being configured to undergo movement from a retracted position to an extended position in which the tapes are extended in a longitudinal direction thereof via the gate valve to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber; and

feeding means for feeding the tapes in the longitudinal direction to the extended position.

2. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus according to claim 1; wherein each of the tapes is made of an elastic material having a curved cross-section.

3. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the feeding means comprises a driving pulley.

4.- 5. (canceled).

6. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;

a transfer chamber connected to the process chamber via a gate valve;

a transfer apparatus disposed in the transfer chamber, the transfer apparatus having a tape having a front end portion and a workpiece holder connected to the front end portion of the tape for supporting the workpiece, the tape being configured to undergo movement from a retracted position to an extended position in which the tape is extended in a longitudinal direction thereof via the gate valve to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber;

a generally cylindrical-shaped case connected to the transfer chamber for accommodating a rear end portion of the tape; and

a feeding mechanism for feeding the tape in the longitudinal direction to the extended position, the feeding mechanism having a driven magnet connected to the rear end portion of the tape and a driving magnet mounted on an exterior surface of the cylindrical-shaped case to undergo movement for driving the driven magnet to feed the tape in the longitudinal direction.

7. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus according to claim 1; further comprising a linear guide member connected to the front end portion of the tapes for movement therewith; and wherein the workpiece holder is connected to an end portion of the linear guide member.

8. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;

a transfer chamber connected to the process chamber via a gate valve;

a transfer apparatus disposed in the transfer chamber, the transfer apparatus having a tape and a workpiece holder connected to the tape for supporting the workpiece, the tape being configured to undergo movement from a retracted position in which the tape is disposed in the transfer chamber to an extended position in which the tape is extended in a

longitudinal direction thereof via the gate valve to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber;

feeding means for feeding the tape in the longitudinal direction to the extended position; and

a linear guide member supporting the workpiece holder and connected to the tape for movement therewith, the linear guide member having a plurality of linear guide portions connected to undergo sliding movement relative to one another during movement of the tape in the longitudinal direction.

9. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the at least one workpiece holder comprises a plurality of workpiece holders each disposed on a respective one of an upper side and a lower side of the tapes.

10. (previously presented) A transfer apparatus comprising:

at least one workpiece holder for supporting a workpiece;

a pair of generally parallel and spaced-apart tapes each having a tip end portion connected to the workpiece holder, the tapes being configured to undergo movement from a retracted position to an extended position in which the tapes are extended in a longitudinal direction thereof; and

feeding means for feeding the tapes in the longitudinal direction to the extended position.

11. (previously presented) A transfer apparatus according to claim 10; wherein each of the tapes is made of an elastic material having a curved cross-section.

12. (previously presented) A transfer apparatus according to claim 10; wherein the feeding means comprises a driving pulley.

13. - 14. (canceled).

15. (currently amended) A transfer apparatus comprising:

a workpiece holder for supporting a workpiece;
a tape having a tip end portion connected to the workpiece holder, the tape being configured to undergo movement from a retracted position to an extended position in which the tape is extended in a longitudinal direction thereof;

feeding means for feeding the tape in the longitudinal direction to the extended position; and

a generally cylindrical-shaped case for accommodating a rear end portion of the tape;

~~according to claim 14; wherein~~ wherein the feeding means comprises a driven magnet connected to the rear end portion of the tape and a driving magnet mounted on an exterior surface of the cylindrical-shaped case to undergo movement for driving the driven magnet to feed the tape in the longitudinal direction.

16. (previously presented) A transfer apparatus according to claim 10; further comprising a linear guide member connected to the tip end portion of the tapes for movement therewith; and wherein the workpiece holder is connected to an end portion of the linear guide member.

17. (previously presented) A transfer apparatus comprising:

a workpiece holder for supporting a workpiece;

a tape having a tip end portion connected to the workpiece holder, the tape being configured to undergo movement from a retracted position to an extended position in which the tape is extended in a longitudinal direction thereof;

feeding means for feeding the tape in the longitudinal direction to the extended position; and

a linear guide member supporting the workpiece holder and connected to the tape for movement therewith, the

linear guide member having a plurality of linear guide portions connected to undergo sliding movement relative to one another during movement of the tape in the longitudinal direction.

18. (previously presented) A transfer apparatus according to claim 10; wherein the at least one workpiece holder comprises a plurality of workpiece holders each disposed on a respective one of an upper side and a lower side of the tapes.

19. (currently amended) A vacuum apparatus comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;

a transfer chamber connected to the process chamber via a gate valve;

a transfer apparatus having linear guide, at least one workpiece holder connected to a tip end portion of the linear guide for supporting the workpiece, and a tape having an end portion connected to the tip end portion of the ~~tape~~ linear guide, the tape being configured to undergo movement from a retracted position to an extended position in which the tape is extended in a longitudinal direction thereof via the gate valve to move the linear guide to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber;

a generally cylindrical-shaped case connected to the transfer chamber for accommodating a rear end portion of the tape; and

a feeding mechanism for feeding the tape in the longitudinal direction to the extended position, the feeding mechanism having a driven magnet connected to the rear end portion of the tape and a driving magnet mounted on an exterior surface of the cylindrical-shaped case to undergo movement for driving the driven magnet to feed the tape in the longitudinal direction.

20. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus according to claim 19; wherein the at least one workpiece holder comprises a plurality of workpiece holders each disposed on a respective one of an upper side and a lower side of the tape.

21. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the tapes are symmetrical about a longitudinal central axis of the workpiece holder.

22. (previously presented) A vacuum apparatus according to claim 10; wherein the tapes are symmetrical about a longitudinal central axis of the workpiece holder.

23. - 24 (canceled).

25. (currently amended) A vacuum apparatus
comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;
a transfer apparatus for positioning the workpiece
in the process chamber and for removing the workpiece from the
process chamber, the transfer apparatus having a pair of
generally parallel and spaced-apart transfer bodies and a
workpiece holder connected to the transfer bodies for
supporting the workpiece, the transfer bodies being configured
to undergo movement from a retracted position to an extended
position in which the transfer bodies are extended in the
longitudinal direction to position the workpiece holder and
the workpiece in the process chamber;

a feeding mechanism for feeding the transfer bodies
in a longitudinal direction thereof to position the workpiece
holder and the workpiece in the process chamber; and

~~according to claim 24; further comprising~~ a winding
mechanism for winding the transfer bodies to the retracted
position.

26. (currently amended) A vacuum apparatus
comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;
a transfer apparatus for positioning the workpiece
in the process chamber and for removing the workpiece from the

process chamber, the transfer apparatus having a pair of generally parallel and spaced-apart transfer bodies and a workpiece holder connected to the transfer bodies for supporting the workpiece, according to claim 23; wherein each of the transfer bodies is being made of an elastic material having a curved cross-section ; and

a feeding mechanism for feeding the transfer bodies in a longitudinal direction thereof to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber.

27. (canceled).

28. (currently amended) A vacuum apparatus
comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;
a transfer apparatus for positioning the workpiece in the process chamber and for removing the workpiece from the process chamber, the transfer apparatus having a pair of generally parallel and spaced-apart transfer bodies and a workpiece holder connected to the transfer bodies for supporting the workpiece;

a feeding mechanism for feeding the transfer bodies in a longitudinal direction thereof to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber; and

~~according to claim 23; wherein the transfer apparatus further comprises~~ a slide mechanism connected to the transfer bodies and supporting the workpiece holder, the slide mechanism having a plurality of slide members mounted to undergo sliding movement during movement of the transfer bodies in the longitudinal direction to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber.

29. (currently amended) A vacuum apparatus comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;
a transfer apparatus for positioning the workpiece in the process chamber and for removing the workpiece from the process chamber, the transfer apparatus having a pair of generally parallel and spaced-apart transfer bodies and a workpiece holder connected to the transfer bodies for supporting the workpiece, ~~according to claim 23; wherein the workpiece holder comprises~~ having a base portion, a plurality of support portions projecting from the base portion in a first direction, and a plurality of connecting portions projecting from the base portion in a second direction opposite to the first direction and connected to the transfer ~~bodies.~~ bodies; and

a feeding mechanism for feeding the transfer bodies in a longitudinal direction thereof to position the workpiece holder and the workpiece in the process chamber.

30. (currently amended) A vacuum apparatus
comprising:

a process chamber for processing a workpiece;
a transfer apparatus for positioning the workpiece
in the process chamber and for removing the workpiece from the
process chamber, the transfer apparatus having a pair of
generally parallel and spaced-apart transfer bodies and a
workpiece holder connected to the transfer bodies for
supporting the workpiece; and

a feeding mechanism comprised of according to claim
23; wherein the feeding mechanism comprises a plurality of
pulleys. pulleys for feeding the transfer bodies in a
longitudinal direction thereof to position the workpiece
holder and the workpiece in the process chamber.